JAPAN-USSR: Response to Soviet Threats

The Japanese protest against Soviet statements about the redeployment of intermediate-range missiles from Europe to Siberia and against Soviet media attacks threatening Japan with nuclear destruction for its close ties with the US was unusually strong. [redacted]

Tokyo's protest was directed at Foreign Minister Gromyko's recent statement that, in the event of an INF agreement in Europe, the USSR probably would redeploy some SS-20 missiles to Siberia. The Japanese also rejected recent Soviet media commentary portraying Soviet actions as a response to Japan's efforts to increase defense capabilities and the decision to station US F-16 fighter planes at Misawa in northeastern Japan. [redacted]

Comment: Moscow's efforts to influence Japanese public opinion may have been counterproductive. Foreign Ministry officials have told [redacted] they were surprised by the heavyhanded Soviet attacks on Prime Minister Nakasone's visits to Washington and South Korea. The Japanese media generally have supported the government's position and have focused on the issue as an example of the USSR's efforts to deflect attention from its own greatly increased military strength in East Asia. [redacted]

[redacted]

The hostile attitude of the Soviets toward Tokyo's apparent desire to strengthen Japan's defenses probably will not be affected by the protest. The tone of Moscow's rhetoric indicates that an early move to improve relations is unlikely. [redacted]

920565 •34